How to... Create an event risk assessment

Whatever their size, **all events require a risk assessment.** As event organiser, you have a legal responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of everyone involved in your event.

A risk assessment is a way of identifying hazards and considering what measures need to be put in place to control them. It is entirely your responsibility to carry out a risk assessment, using the specific facts and circumstances of your event, but please remember your local British Waterways' events co-ordinator will be happy to help with any queries.

Useful definitions

Hazard - something with the potential to cause harm.

Risk – this is made up of two factors, **likelihood** and **severity of effect**. How likely is the hazard to cause harm and how severe would the effect of this harm be?

There are different measures of likelihood and effect. An example for measuring likelihood would be:

- unlikely
- likely
- very likely

An example for measuring severity of effect would be:

- first aid case
- major injury
- fatality

You can then work out if the risk is low, medium or high, for example:

- unlikely + first aid case = low risk
- likely + first aid case = medium risk
- very likely + major injury = high risk

Carrying out a risk assessment

1. It is recommended that you visit the proposed event site before carrying out your risk assessment. Take note of any British Waterways' information or warning signs. You may also find it useful to contact the event co-ordinator on the canal where the event is being held.

2. Divide the whole event into sections by types of activity

For each type of activity consider:

3. The hazards associated with this part of the event / day. You might consider:

slips, trips and falls	carrying/manual handling
moving parts of machinery	chemicals including dust or fume
fire hazard	weather conditions
vehicles on site	car parking
crowd control	electrical appliances
high noise levels	poor light
poor heating	poor ventilation

Top Tip! Hazards in a canal environment could include:

water's edge	fast flowing water
proximity of deep water	proximity of shallow water
contact with waterborne agents i.e. Leptospirosis	

There will also be hazards from any activities or demonstrations being provided.

4. Who could be at risk from each hazard? Remember that this might not always be people. For example, groups you might include are:

stewards	employees	volunteers
contractors	exhibitors	vendors
performers	the public	children
elderly	locals	people with disabilities
other canal users	livestock	horses

5. Consider the level of that risk – High / Medium / Low

6. Consider any actions or measures required to reduce the risk as much as possible.

Consider your arrangements or site lay out, and aim to remove the hazard; or prevent access to the hazard; or restrict access; reduce exposure to the hazard; or find a safer substitute.

Mention any suitable training or instruction and compliance with relevant legislation. Codes of good practice and British Standards are useful here.

Does the activity need to be monitored by event marshals? Do participants need to bring anything with them to the event? Personal protective equipment (PPE) may be necessary.

Do you need to make additional arrangements? Consider:

first aid	shelter - gazebo/tents
toilets	throw lines for water rescue
refreshments	high visibility jackets for marshals
fire safety	cash handling
security	access to and from the water/canal
litter removal	shelter - gazebo/tents
signs	communication between marshals and organiser

7. You can now identify which items to include in the briefings for marshals and participants. You can also identify who is responsible for the action at the event.

8. Reassess the level of risk – High / Medium / Low

9. If the risk is still not acceptable, return to step 6. If you cannot reduce a hazard to an acceptable risk, you must decide whether the activity concerned should go ahead.

You can download a blank risk assessment form to fill in for your event, or view an example assessment. Please remember - the risks associated with each event are specific to that occasion, so you **must** carry out your own assessment.

All contractors invited to the event should also carry out their own risk assessment and method statement specific to their activities at your event (for example, they must consider the event location and expected participants). They should provide you with a copy of these documents, which should be attached to your risk assessment.